

COSSINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

INTRODUCTION

This complaints procedure has been prepared to take into account changes in the law since 2003 and to cover a wider scope than the previous, and now obsolete, 2003 document.

It is consistent with Parish Council Standing Orders and Code of Conduct

It aims to deal with complaints in the most appropriate, fair, and efficient way for all concerned. All matters will be handled in confidence from the initial complaint, investigation, and reporting of the outcome to protect the identities of all involved.

A complaint to the Parish Council could be about its procedures, administration, or handling of a particular matter – or about the conduct of a member or members of the Parish Council. However, the Parish Council has no authority or responsibility regarding the conduct of its members when not representing the Parish Council and any complaints of this nature should be addressed to the relevant authority (e.g., the Police).

PROCEDURE

- a) All complaints regarding Parish Council procedures, activities and members should be forwarded in writing to the Clerk so that the complainant can be advised of the appropriate procedure for the type of complaint raised and likely timescales for investigation. The complaint will be acknowledged in 7 working days apart from exceptional unavoidable circumstances (such as holidays). More information may be requested from the complainant if required for proper investigation or if the validity of the complaint is in question.
- b) Complaints regarding the Clerk should similarly be directed towards the Chairman.
- c) The complainant will be notified of the outcome of any investigations into a valid complaint against the Parish Council. The results of any such investigation will also be summarised at the next Parish Council meeting following the conclusion of investigations. For legal and confidentiality reasons, the record in the minutes will be summarised and no names will be included.

NOTES:

- Any complaints raised during a Parish Council meeting should be referred to this procedure in the first instance.
- If the complainant is unhappy regarding the results of, or any response to, a by the Parish Council then they can refer the matter to the Sedgemoor District Council Monitoring Officer.
- The complainant would normally be advised at (a) or (b) to refer any serious complaint regarding the conduct of individuals on the Parish Council to the Sedgemoor District Council Monitoring Officer for reasons of neutrality.
- Habitual and vexatious complaints are strongly discouraged.
- It should be noted that, whatever the findings of an investigation, Parish Councillors can only be removed from office if they have committed a serious criminal offence or no longer satisfy the criteria for being a councillor (e.g., they no longer live or work in the Parish) – or they resign or are not re-elected at a normal election.